

In the Claims

Claims 1-28 (cancelled).

Claim 29 (currently amended): An apparatus for conditioning a surface of a polishing pad after chemical-mechanical polishing of a semiconductor substrate with the pad surface, comprising:

a conditioning stone; and

a steam outlet port proximate the conditioning stone; the steam outlet port being configured to jet steam onto the pad surface during the conditioning of the pad surface; the apparatus being configured so that the steam has a temperature of from about 200°F to about 300°F as the steam exits the steam outlet port and accordingly so that all material exiting the steam outlet port is in vapor phase when the apparatus is utilized for conditioning a surface of a polishing pad.

Claim 30 (original): The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the polishing pad is configured for utilization in a web chemical-mechanical polishing tool.

Claim 31 (currently amended): The apparatus of claim 29 configured to jet the steam onto the pad surface such that that the steam impacts the surface with a pressure of from about 10 psi to about 20 psi.

Claim 32 (original): The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the steam outlet port is configured to move relative to the pad surface as steam is jetted out of the port and against the pad surface.

Claim 33 (original): The apparatus of claim 29 further comprising a source of steam in fluid communication with the steam outlet.

Claim 34 (original): The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the source comprises ammonium within the steam.

Claim 35 (original): The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the source comprises ammonium citrate within the steam.